

JORDAN DECLARATION ON INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

The government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and all its national and international development partners have committed to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) by 2030 to "**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**", guided individually and collectively by key national and international commitments:

- *Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (1952)*
- *UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)*
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*
- *Education Law (1994)*
- *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007)*
- *Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017)*
- *Education Strategic Plan (2018 to 2025)*
- *Inclusive Education Strategy (2020 to 2030)*

Inclusive Education is the most effective means to improve learning outcomes, prevent discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, address the health and well-being of all learners, ensure space availability and the right to education for all.

Commitment to action

We, representatives and officials from the Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Development Partners, International and National stakeholders and Non-Governmental Organizations, herewith reiterate our commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 "**to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**".

We, herewith commit to advocate for and work jointly towards **putting learners' inclusion and diversity at the heart of education post Covid-19 and to address the 'Transforming education agenda'**, in particular towards:

1. System strengthening for greater inclusion and diversity in education, including key areas of policy, planning, monitoring and capacity development;
2. Aligned legal frameworks with national and international commitments towards inclusion and diversity in education and putting the laws and existing strategies into practice;
3. Increased collection and access to data on inclusion for improved evidence-based planning and practice;
4. Further equitable, efficient and innovative funding, and sustainable programmes towards greater inclusion and diversity in education;
5. Systematic capacity development, linked to professional development standards, for all concerned entities and stakeholders towards inclusion and diversity in education, in Jordanian schools and communities, in particular on disability inclusion;

6. Removing barriers to exclusion from and within the education sector and mainstreaming inclusion throughout existing administrative processes within the education sector for example in assessment and supervision.
7. Developing enabling, safe and accessible learning environments and support systems at central, field directorate and school levels for all children with special emphasis on children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education.
8. Coordinated advocacy and activities/projects towards greater inclusion and diversity in education using the definition outlined below, and including the 10 groups of children in programme planning and implementation;
9. Empowering learners, parents, teachers, principals, and education officials in promoting, implementing and monitoring relevant education, improve future employability prospects, and promotes innovation and leadership in education in line with national and international commitments.

Definition of Inclusion and Diversity in Education

In a series of technical workshop during 2021 senior officials from the Ministry of Education, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and their key development partners agreed on the following definition of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Inclusion and Diversity in Education.

The definition of inclusion and diversity in education and 10 groups of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education was endorsed by H.R.H. Prince Mired bin Ra'ad bin Zeid Al-Hussein, President of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), and H.E. Prof. Wajih Owais, Minister of Education on 20th April 2022.

Systems, political will, and commitments by all key partners and stakeholders are in place to guarantee that all students regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and circumstances have equal and equitable access to quality education in their home or host communities, with learning environments that embrace diversity and support their participation and achievements towards reaching their full social, emotional, physical, and cognitive potentials.

Access:

All students are welcomed in their neighbourhood, or nearby schools and are enrolled and attend age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute, and participate in school activities, and have their psycho-social needs addressed.

Environment:

Develop and enhance schools, classrooms, virtual learning environments, and activities based on universal design principles so that all students are enabled to reach their full individual and collective potentials.

Participation:

All students are welcomed and supported to express their opinions, participate in all school activities, and have their diverse needs and strengths met in ways that are responsive, accepting, and respectful.

Management:

Education officials, school management, teachers, and other school staff are enabled and empowered to work individually and collectively in supporting all students towards reaching their full potentials and contributing to their families, communities, and the wider society.

Professional development:

All education officials, school management, teachers and other school staff have access to relevant, quality pre- and in-service professional development oriented towards increased inclusion and diversity in education.

Commitments:

The government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As per SDG No. 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." Jordan has signed on to developing an education system of high quality that is inclusive and equitable for all. So, the question is not if we as key stakeholders (the Jordanian Ministry of Education, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Development Partners, International and National stakeholders and Non-Governmental Organizations), should ensure that we move towards greater inclusion and diversity in education, instead the question is how.

10 Groups of Children most Vulnerable to Exclusion from and within Education

To increase inclusion and diversity in education, it is important to consider which children are at risk from exclusion from and marginalization within education. Through the process of developing the 'Roadmap Towards Capacity Development for System Strengthening', a comprehensive list of 10 groups of children vulnerable to exclusion from and marginalization within education in Jordan were identified and agreed on by education stakeholders (listed alphabetically):

1. Children affected by drugs and substance abuse
2. Children experiencing gender inequality
3. Children from ethnic, language and social minorities
4. Children from income poor backgrounds
5. Children suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse, incl. orphans
6. Children who are under-stimulated and disengaged (including first generation learners, children who are not supported by their families, and those who are often referred to as 'gifted' and 'talented')

7. *Children with disabilities¹*
8. *Institutionalized children and children without freedom of movement*
9. *Out-of-school children (OSC) (i.e., children who dropped out of school, never enrolled in formal education, and street and working children)*
10. *Refugee, returnee, and unregistered children (i.e., children who were never registered at birth or may be registered in another country)*

The list above is helpful in identifying groups of vulnerable children more generally in Jordan, however it is best to also consider which groups are vulnerable, locally, in school communities, as the groups of excluded or marginalised children may differ from community to community, and some of the interventions implemented to better include such vulnerable children will need to be tailored to fit the needs of specific groups that are vulnerable in a particular school community context.

When the concept of 'inclusion and diversity in education' is expanded to include other groups of children vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation alongside **children with disabilities and learning difficulties**, it is important that investment levels in '**disability inclusion**' continue to consider expansion of resources as needed in different geographical areas.

We confirm the eight commitments outlined above, affirm our support for the definition of inclusion and diversity in education, and recognise the 10 groups of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education.

With our joint commitment, we will coordinate our efforts towards greater inclusion and diversity in education and ensure that these are reflected in all our policies, plans, programmes, projects, and initiatives.

Amman, 26/06/22

President Higher Council for the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities
HRH Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Husseini

Minister of Education
HE Prof Wajih Owaiss

¹ Including for instance children with learning difficulties.